GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2089
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2007
INHUMAN TREATMENT TO INDIAN PRISONERS IN PAKISTAN
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any reports of inhuman treatment meted out to Indian prisoners in Pakistan;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a&b) Yes. Instances of inhuman treatment of Indian prisoners come to the notice of consular officers of our mission in Islamabad from time to time. Pakistan authorities do not inform the Indian Mission of the arrest of Indians and consular access is not given until their sentence is complete. In many cases, it is delayed even beyond that. According to available information till date, at least 92 Indian civilian prisoners in Pakistani jails are yet to be given consular access. 390 fishermen and 149 civilian prisoners and 74 PoWs are still languishing in Pakistan jails. Indian prisoners released by Pakistan have reported ill-treatment during imprisonment.

(c) Government have consistently taken up the issue of the humane treatment and release of prisoners with Pakistan. During the Home Secretary talks on May 30-31, 2006, it was agreed to release all the remaining fishermen by 30 June 2006, exchange lists of civilian prisoners by 15 June 2006 and facilitate consular access by 31 July 2006 for subsequent release. As agreed, on 30 June 2006, India released 38 Pakistani civilian prisoners who had completed their sentence and provided consular access for the rest. Pakistan, however, released only 19 Indian civilian prisoners. During the FS talks on November 14-15, 2006 both sides agreed to release eligible civilian prisoners and fishermen whose nationality had been confirmed by December 25, 2006. During the visit of External Affairs Minister to Pakistan on January 13-14, 2007, both sides agreed to establish a committee on prisoners, comprising retired judges of the superior judiciary to visit jails in the two countries and propose steps to ensure humane treatment and expedite release of prisoners who have completed their prison terms. The names of judges have been exchanged by both sides.